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Letter dated 10 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In view of the upcoming briefing to the Security Council on "Threats to international peace and security: prevention and fight against genocide" on 16 April 2014, I have the honour to transmit herewith the conclusions of the International Conference on Genocide Prevention, which was held in Brussels on 31 March and 1 April 2014 in the presence of the Secretary-General (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bénédicte **Frankinet**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

14-29719 (E) 140414

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On the initiative of the Government of Belgium and with the cooperation of the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, an international conference on genocide prevention was held in Brussels on 31 March and 1 April 2014, bringing together representatives of 125 States and of relevant regional and universal international organizations, as well as academics, legal experts, representatives of civil society and parliamentarians.

The participants discussed ways and means to rid humankind of the scourge of mass atrocities and genocide and reached understanding on an impressive number of elements.

The conference can be summarized as follows:

Sixty-five years after the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, marking also the end of the Holocaust, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the twentieth anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the participating States, the regional international organizations and the United Nations note:

(a) That genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are the most serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law;

(b) That the international community has made substantial progress in fighting impunity for perpetrators of crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. International legally binding instruments such as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted on 9 December 1948, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court remain the legal basis for punishing the crime of genocide and for ensuring that perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes are brought to justice;

(c) That the commitment by Heads of State and Government reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome reaffirmed each State's responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

(d) That international human rights instruments, in particular those related to incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, play an important role in preventing mass atrocities;

(e) That regional mechanisms such as article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which empowers member States to intervene in situations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, as well as the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention and the Global Action against Mass Atrocity Crimes, immensely contribute towards the prevention and punishment of atrocity crimes.

Participating States, regional organizations such as the European Union and the African Union, as well as the United Nations remain committed to the implementation of relevant international legal instruments and of political consensus agreements, such as the responsibility to protect, and express their strong resolve:

(a) To sign, ratify and domesticate the above-mentioned international legal instruments and implement the responsibility to protect;

(b) To ensure that national strategies and policies fully respect the above-mentioned international legal instruments, as well as political commitments;

(c) To protect and promote the fundamental rights of all populations, including minorities, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, race or religion;

(d) To take all measures necessary to prevent incitement to violence based on ethnic or religious hatred, including enacting specific laws that prohibit incitement and promote national cohesion;

(e) To establish, as appropriate, in conjunction with the focal points for the responsibility to protect, national focal points on genocide prevention in order to monitor information about present or future dangers of mass atrocities and duly inform the competent national authorities of such developments;

(f) To exchange such information with the regional organizations of which participating States are members, and thus establish a permanent network designed to inform, consult and take the appropriate decisions for political preventive action as a matter of priority, at the regional level, while remaining in agreement with the Secretary-General and the Security Council;

(g) To collaborate closely with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect on building capacity, advocacy for prevention and information-sharing;

(h) To remind Member States that, under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, they have an obligation to take measures necessary to prevent genocide, which includes bringing such situations to the attention of the Security Council;

(i) To encourage Governments to include atrocity prevention in school curricula;

(j) To encourage and develop educational tools to raise the awareness of young people and future generations of the fundamental importance of protecting human rights and the values of diversity, with special focus on the rights of minority groups;

(k) To encourage research and publications that contribute to the prevention of atrocity crimes;

(l) To participate actively in international, regional and national discussions on the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes;

(m) To consider undertaking national assessments of risk and resilience and voluntary peer review assessments in coordination with regional partners;

(n) To include the prevention of genocide as a priority item on the agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

(o) To remain seized of the matter.